



The mysterious Pinckney gravestone



Introduction

A marble headstone that looks to be quite old stands in a grove of trees at Charles Pinckney National Historic Site. Who is buried at Snee Farm? Isn't Charles Pinckney's grave located at Christ Church? Which Pinckney is buried in Charleston? Whose headstone is this? Visitors to Charles Pinckney National Historic Site often ask these questions. For years, the answers were a muddled mixture of misinformation and guesses. Through various sources, the whole puzzle can now be pieced together.

A Cenotaph

Three years after his father's death in 1782, Charles Pinckney commissioned a marble headstone for Col. Charles Pinckney's grave. The stone arrived with an incorrect inscription that listed Col. Pinckney's age as 52, rather than 50.

Instead of using it for his father's grave, Charles placed this stone as a cenotaph on his Mt. Pleasant plantation, Snee Farm. A cenotaph is a monument

or tomb built for someone whose remains are buried elsewhere. It was probably laid horizontally on a low brick platform. It stood at Snee Farm for over a century.

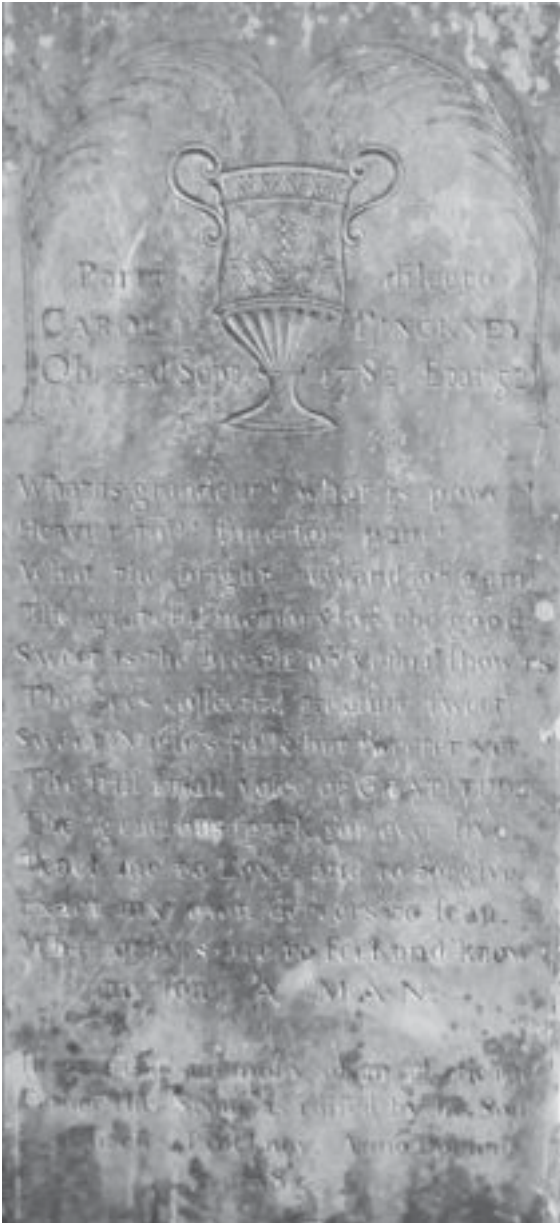
Christ Church gave Thomas Pinckney permission in 1892 to move the cenotaph from Snee Farm to the parish churchyard, 1/4-mile away, where it now lies.



The original cenotaph lies in the parish churchyard at Christ Church in Mount Pleasant. The marble face is badly weathered, and the inscription is difficult to read.

Tribute to Col. Pinckney	<p>Nineteen years later in 1911, Snee Farm owner Thomas J. Hamlin carved a wooden marker from an oak that had recently fallen. He placed this marker near the former site of the marble cenotaph at Snee Farm.</p> <p>Sometime between 1949 and 1968 Thomas Stone, then owner of the property, placed a replica of the original marble cenotaph at Snee Farm near the wooden Hamlin marker. The carved Hamlin marker has since disappeared, but Mr. Stone’s replica cenotaph still stands as a vertical tablet southeast of the house at Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, a remanant of historic Snee Farm plantation. This cenotaph is an exact replica of the original at the Christ Church graveyard, down to Col. Pinckney’s incorrect age.</p>	<p>The answer to our questions, then, is that neither Charles Pinckney nor his father is buried at Christ Church or Snee Farm. The stones bearing the name of Col. Charles Pinckney are both cenotaphs. Col. Pinckney was buried in the graveyard at St. Philips Episcopal Church in Charleston, and his son Charles is buried beside him.</p> <p>Today visitors to the area can see the original cenotaph at Christ Church in Mt. Pleasant, the replica cenotaph 1/4-mile away at Charles Pinckney National Historic Site, and the actual graves of both Pinckneys at St. Philip’s Episcopal Church in Charleston.</p>
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Inscription	<p>This inscription is engraved on both the original cenotaph now located at Christ Church and on the replica cenotaph at Charles Pinckney National Historic Site. The heading is in Latin and is believed to mean “Beloved father, Charles Pinckney, died September 22, 1782 at the age of 52.”</p>
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The replica cenotaph was placed at Snee Farm sometime after World War II.

Parri dilecto
CAROLO PINCKNEY
Ob. 22d Sept. 1782 Ætat. 52.

What is grandeur! what is power!
Heavier toil! superior plan!
What the bright reward of gain?
The grateful memory of the good
Sweet is the breath of vernal show’rs
The bees collected treasure sweet,
Sweet Music’s folk but sweeter yet.
The still small voice of GRATITUDE
The generous spark, for ever live,
Teach me to Love, and to forgive,
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are to feel and know
my son A MAN.

In grateful memory of an affectionate
Father this Stone is raised by his Son
Charles Pinckney. Anno Domini,
1785

About Your Visit	<p>Charles Pinckney National Historic Site is administered by the National Park Service, US Department of the Interior. The site is located at 1254 Long Point Road in Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina. Hours of operation are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. The site is closed on New Year’s Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.</p>	<p>For more information, contact the park at:</p> <p>Charles Pinckney National Historic Site 1214 Middle Street Sullivan’s Island, SC 29482 (843) 881-5516 http://www.nps.gov/chpi</p>
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